

EuroPAM in-law indicators on Freedom of Information

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EuroPAM is a primary data collection effort that produces assessments of in-law and in-practice efforts to enhance the transparency of public administration and the accountability of public officials. It is part of an EU-funded digital whistleblowing project (DIGIWHIST) that aims to improve trust in governments and efficiency of public spending across Europe.

The right to information guarantees access to information or records held by government bodies. It may also prescribe proactive disclosure of official data or documents, specify the procedures for access, and outline exemptions for purposes of national security and other concerns. These obligations establish a method of accountability for governments that is upheld by civil society and individual citizens.

Freedom of Information (right/access to information)	
Qual-1	Scope and Coverage
Qual-2	Scope of disclosure
Qual-3	Right to information enshrined in law
Qual-4	Information is defined
Qual-5	Proactive disclosure is specified
Qual-6	Coverage of public and private sectors
Qual-7	Executive branch
Qual-8	Legislative branch
Qual-9	Judicial branch
Qual-10	Other public bodies
Qual-11	Private sector
Qual-12	Access to specific documents (subject to reactive and/or proactive disclosure)
Qual-13	Draft legal instruments
Qual-14	Enacted legal instruments
Qual-15	Annual budgets
Qual-16	Annual chart of accounts (actual expenditures)
Qual-17	Annual reports of public entities and programs
Qual-18	Information access and release
Qual-19	Procedural access
Qual-20	Universal access (agencies, citizens and non-citizens)
Qual-21	Type of request is specified (written, electronic, oral)
Qual-22	Assistance to requesters must be provided by law (includes barriers due to language differences, illiteracy, complexity of requests, etc.)
Qual-23	Cost of access is specified (free, request fees, photocopying costs, other administrative costs)
Qual-24	Deadlines for release of information
Qual-25	20-day response deadline
Qual-26	Agency granted right to extend response time

Qual-27	Maximum total response time of no more than 40 days
Qual-28	Exceptions and Overrides
Qual-29	Exemptions to disclosure
Qual-30	Existence of secrecy/states secrets law
Qual-31	Existence of personal privacy/data law
Qual-32	Exemptions to disclosure are specified
Qual-33	Balancing tests in the public interest Specified exemptions to disclosure may be overridden (dismissed ex ante) in cases where disclosure of information benefits the public interest.
Qual-34	Appeals
Qual-35	Appeals allowed within public entities
Qual-36	Independent, non-judicial appeals mechanism, e.g., information commissioner. Does not include Ombudsman unless appeals decisions are binding.
Qual-37	Judicial appeals mechanism
Qual-38	Sanctions for non-compliance
Qual-39	Administrative sanctions are specified for violations of disclosure requirements
Qual-40	Fines are specified for violations of disclosure requirements
Qual-41	Criminal sanctions are specified for violations of disclosure requirements
Qual-42	Monitoring and Oversight
Qual-43	Information officers must be appointed in public agencies
Qual-44	A public body is responsible for applying sanctions
Qual-45	A public body is responsible for public outreach (raising public awareness)
Qual-46	A nodal agency for RTI is specified (implementation support/compliance within public sector). Does not include Ombudsman.
Qual-47	Ombudsman involvement in implementation is specified by law
Qual-48	Data on requests and appeals must be released to the public

Red font = not including in scoring